

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
WASHWOOD HEATH WARD MEETING
TUESDAY 31 JANUARY 2017
7:00PM
THE MAIN HALL
THORNTON ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL
WASHWOOD HEATH

MEETING NOTES

Present: Councillors Ansar Ali Khan, Mariam Khan and Mohammed Idrees

Officers: Louise Bessant – Project Manager, Fleet and Waste Management Services
Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Team
Mushtaq Hussain – Place Manager
Lucy O’Grady – Customer Services Manager, Amey
Martyn Smith – Operational Manager, Regulation and Enforcement Services
Sgt Ben Westwood – West Midlands Police
Pat Whyte – Community Development & Support Officer
PC Zoe Williams – West Midlands Police

There were 18 residents in attendance.

Cllr Mariam Khan in the Chair

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING

The Chair advised that:-

‘Members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items’.

Residents were reminded that permission must be sought from members of the public prior to taking their photograph or recording their comments.

2. APOLOGIES

None submitted.

Following introductions, the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. CLEANER STREETS PROJECT – REPORT FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT

Louise Bessant, Project Manager briefly advised of the Council’s Cleaner, Green Streets Programme.

A number of partner agencies were actively involved and worked alongside residents and Members at a local level in helping to keep the streets and open spaces clean, tidy and free from rubbish.

The Ward had been chosen as one of the pilot areas for the initiative over an eight week period along with Hall Green Ward. The pilot scheme had been very successful and had seen an increase in cleanliness across the ward, including public open spaces by over 71%. In addition, the introduction of striped sacks for flats above shops where wheelie bins were not appropriate had helped to identify genuine domestic waste.

Further plans included installing litter bin sensors; a review of the wheelie bin sizes to ensure the right sized bins were issued to meet the needs of the resident, and a three day clean-up campaign during 3-5 March to run alongside the National Keep Britain Tidy Event.

Concluding the update, Ms Bessant commended the hard work of everyone involved with the ward pilot and that efforts would continue to be made to ensure that residents had the necessary equipment available to them to help keep their streets and neighbourhoods clean.

Cllr A Khan also commended the hard work of several residents who had worked tirelessly alongside officers and partner agencies to help clear the streets from litter during the pilot scheme and the week long clean-up activity in November.

However, whilst there was a reduction in the number of hot-spot areas, fly-tipping still remained a problem, with Mandip Avenue and Cherry Road being particularly problematic. Some local business owners and shop-keepers had also taken steps to address litter/rubbish outside of their premises.

The process of educating and engaging residents, encouraging them to take responsibility for the disposal of their rubbish, and fostering pride in their neighbourhood was ongoing, and where appropriate, robust enforcement action must be taken against offenders.

Welcoming the update and improvements, Cllr Idrees stressed the need for residents and partner agencies to continue working together to ensure that streets and neighbourhoods were kept free from litter and fly-tipping, given that the Council budget and available resources would be significantly reduced over the next 12 months.

Concerns were also expressed by several residents regarding the sustainability of the clean-ups, and that all sections of the community must be actively encouraged to contribute positively to the cleanliness of their local neighbourhood, and that young people should not be solely responsible for clearing away rubbish dumped by others. Residents also felt that the engagement, education and involvement of newly arrived communities were essential if cleanliness in the ward was to be improved and maintained, and expressed disappointment at the poor resident turnout for the organised clean-ups.

Consideration must also be given to encouraging residents to become Street Champions, and taking ownership of their road or 'patch'.

Referring to November's Week of Action, the Chair advised that the good practices shown by residents and partner agencies had been commended and reviewed by the

wider City Partnership Group to see what improvements (if any) could be made to future clean-up events and activities.

Members and residents stressed that the involvement of the local mosques and churches was essential if the re-education and participation of residents with clean-ups and rubbish disposal was to be successful.

The Chair advised of a number of elderly residents who had also indicated their interest in getting involved; discussions were ongoing with partner agencies to see how this could be arranged, and that An Elders Day had been arranged for 1 March.

An Eco Group had also been set up by one of the local primary schools to get young people involved in environmental issues. Veolia was also engaged in specific programmes and training on environmental issues, and free training was available for community/faith leaders and schools.

Members thanked Louise Bessant for her attendance and update.

Action: All to Note

4. ENFORCEMENT ACTION/PROSECUTIONS ON LITTER AND FLYTIPPING

Following introductions, Martyn Smith, Operational Manager, Regulation and Enforcement Services advised of the following:-

- A clean and green city was one of the Council's main priorities
- A Task Force had been specifically set up to tackle the illegal dumping of waste and Flytipping
- Approx. 9000 incidents of flytipping/waste dumping was reported during the last Year, and over £1M spent on its removal
- Evidence and witness statements were essential if offenders were to be successfully Prosecuted - Officers were not able to act on 'hearsay'
- There were currently over 500 active investigations and 144 active investigations regarding trade/business waste ongoing across the city. To date, there had been 39 successful prosecutions.
- Proactive enforcement action had to be balanced with improving residents' and business owners' attitudes towards rubbish dumping, and encouraging greater responsibility towards its disposal - work was currently ongoing with traders and business owners
- Work was also ongoing with private landlords to address the rubbish nuisance issues caused by their tenant(s).

Responding to residents' questions, Mr Smith advised that where rubbish had been dumped on public land, the City Council had a duty of care and responsibility for its removal. Rubbish on privately owned land remained the responsibility of the land owner for its removal; however the City Council had enforcement powers to instruct the landowner to do so.

Referring to matters locally, residents were advised that 65 business owners/traders were currently under investigation; 54 had enforcement action taken against them. 29 Fixed Penalty Notices had also been issued to resident in the ward for littering offences.

Regarding fly-tipping, robust evidence was needed to enable a successful outcome, and addressing residents' concerns regarding the fear of reprisals, Mr Smith advised there was very little evidence of witnesses being intimidated by offenders, and that Officers would always seek to reassure and support residents as necessary.

Mr Smith further advised the Unit had access to 8 mobile CCTV cameras which were deployed to hot spot areas across the city. 4 hotspot areas across the ward had been identified and 16 incidents of fly-tipping had been reported, 14 of which were currently under criminal investigations.

Responding to further questions, Mr Smith confirmed that the successful prosecutions in the ward were secured based on robust evidence (CCTV footage/the offence being seen by appropriate officer) and witness statements. Recordings from the cameras could be requested by WMP or WMFS if it was to be used to assist with a criminal investigation.

The use of Community Protection Orders/ Notices was also being explored where there was ongoing blight in the neighbourhood/local community. These did not require residents to give their names and address.

Regarding the trade waste agreement, all businesses in the ward was visited by officers to ensure an appropriate waste agreement was in place, and to make the arrangements where necessary. Concerns had also been identified regarding the misunderstanding between trade waste disposal arrangements and the payment of business rates for the premises, which officers continually had to explain and resolve.

Referring further to successful prosecutions and fines/costs imposed by the Court, Mr Smith advised that it was the Court who determined the fines/costs; costs were given to the City Council and all monies generated from fines granted to HM Treasury. There were two tariff levels for FPNs set by Central Government – Local Authorities were able to choose the level of tariff – higher or lower. Monies generated by Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) were paid to and retained by the City Council. Residents felt that the higher tariff charge should be chosen by the City Council and imposed on those continually disregarding the law.

Action: The Chair agreed to raise the higher tariff charge with the Licensing and Public Protection Committee

Members and residents thanked Martyn Smith for his attendance and information update.

5. AMEY WARD HIGHWAY PROGRAMME – INFORMATION UPDATE

Following introductions, Lucy O'Grady, Customer Relations Manager, Amey briefly advised that:-

- Changes had been made to the gulley cleansing programme; a more targeted approach had been adopted for each gulley; data would also be collated and inspection/cleaning would be carried out accordingly. Where necessary, roads would also be closed to enable gulley cleansing to be carried out. Residents and businesses in the immediate roads affected by a closure would be notified in advance.
- The ward highway programme from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018 had been agreed. Improvement works to the following roads was due to be carried out:-
 - Bamville Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Dorlcote Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Foxton Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Gowan Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Feb-17
 - Sandbourne Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Shaw Hill Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Sunnydene - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Woodwells Road - Whole Road Street Lighting Upgrade from Jan-17
 - Ward End Close from Ward End Park Road To End Footway Maintenance - 1 Apr-17
 - Woodlands Road from Alderson Road to End Footway Maintenance -1 Jan-17

Alum Rock Road – road resurfacing would be carried out in two phases. Details of the work and road closures would be sent to Members and affected residents and businesses in advance of the work commencing. Members stressed that work must be completed on time so that the impact on businesses was minimised.

Responding to questions regarding gulley cleansing and slow drainage issues, Lucy O’Grady briefly advised of the construction and capacity of the public sewers which made them unable to cope with copious amounts of water generated in a very short space of time.

Residents advised of the following concerns:-

- Ward End Park Road, Naseby and Hazelbeech Roads – several houses on these roads were regularly flooded due to very slow drainage/gulley blockages.

Action: Amey to investigate and advise Members accordingly

- Highfield Road – blocked drain by house no 88

Action: Amey to investigate and action as necessary

- St. Saviours Road – speed reduction cushions in very poor condition

Action: Amey to investigate and action as necessary

Members and residents thanked Lucy O’Grady for her attendance and update.

6. **POLICE UPDATE**

Sgt Ben Westwood advised of the following:-

- A slight increase in burglary and robberies compared to last year.

- A significant increase in vehicle crime/theft from vehicles, with taxis being targeted by offenders. There were 60 reported incidents over the last 60 days. Drivers and vehicle owners were reminded to be particularly vigilant and to ensure that all valuable items were removed from sight. Car registration number plates had also targeted for removal.
- A traffic operation was recently carried out in Washwood Heath Road/Ward End Park, which resulted in the arrest of a known prolific offender. 20 cars were also seized during the operation.
- The arrest of a known drug dealer on Stechford Lane. A high value vehicle stolen from outside of the area had also recovered.
- Hendon Drive – a Public Protection Order had been granted.

Members thanked Sgt Westwood for the update.

7. LOCAL INNOVATION FUND

Cllr A Khan briefly advised of a Local Innovation Fund of £48,000 which had been made available to each ward in the city to fund/support new innovative ideas to suit the needs of the community.

The funding was not a grant aided scheme or a replacement for the Community Chest Programme previously allocated to each ward.

The use of the Fund was discussed at the Washwood Heath Strategic Partnership Group meetings; all partners including resident representatives felt the fund should be invested in young people/youth to help address a number of issues, including high employment, skills training, mentoring and so on. A suitable building had been identified for use as a community hub, however due process had to be followed in order to secure the building.

Cllr A Khan further advised that residents would continue to be updated on progress.

Following an invitation from the Chair, local resident and Strategic Partner Mohammed Ali briefly advised of the ongoing work carried out by his community group with young people and warmly welcomed the support of Members and the wider SPG group. Further details was also given of the engagement and participation activities with newly arrived communities.

Action: All to Note

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates were suggested for consideration:-

Tuesday 28 March, 7pm

Tuesday 6 June, 7pm

Dates and venues to be confirmed.

Action: All to Note

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bennetts Road Petition

The Chair advised that several council departments were currently investigating the concerns raised, some of which were quite complex.

A formal response would be submitted in due course.

Highfield Road Petition/Scrutiny Meeting – Bereavement Services

Cllr A Khan advised that the initial meeting had been postponed due to room capacity concerns. A further meeting for Members had been arranged for 24 February.

There were no other urgent business raised.

10. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

Noted and agreed that:-

“In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee”.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and active participation.

The meeting closed at 9:10pm